

Veterans News

Contact: JP Tremblay
Jerry Jones
Jaime Arteaga
Legislation and Public Affairs
916-653-2192
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NEWS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

New Ambulatory Care Center & Skilled Nursing Community Living Center

PALO ALTO, CA - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has selected San Joaquin County in the Central Valley to build a new, multi-specialty Valley Ambulatory Care Center co-located with a new 120-bed Community Living Center (a skilled nursing facility).

"This is just the first step, in determining where we will build the facilities," Lisa Freeman, director of VA Palo Alto Health Care System (VAPAHCS) said. "The consultants have already begun the evaluation process and by June we should have a report that will help determine where we can build within San Joaquin County."

Designating the county to build the new facilities is part of the implementation of the CARES (Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services) process that began more than five years ago to evaluate VA health care and ensure that health care services were located in close proximity to where Veterans live. Today, more than 80,000 Veterans reside in the Central Valley. This number continues to increase as veterans migrate away from the San Francisco Bay area's high cost of living into more affordable communities.

In December 2008, VA teamed up with a consulting team led by Ratcliff, an experienced health care architectural firm and ECG Management Consultants, Inc., to provide recommendations regarding where to build these new facilities. An evaluation of each of the four Central Valley counties was completed: Stanislaus, San Joaquin, Tuolumne, and Calaveras. After review of criteria such as Veteran population, transportation, potential hospital partnerships, cost of land and availability of qualified medical staff, VA determined that San Joaquin County would be the best location.

The new Ambulatory Care Clinic in San Joaquin County will provide new services, such as radiology, pharmacy, dental, optometry, audiology and physical therapy. VA intends to have these facilities open in 2015.

Concurrently, VAPAHCS is expanding the existing clinics in Stockton and Modesto to meet current Veteran demand. This will serve as an interim step until the new Central Valley Ambulatory Care Clinic can be opened in 2015. This interim expansion is aimed at bringing rehabilitation services and more mental health services to these sites. Stockton and Modesto expansions are scheduled to be complete by 2010. Until the new Ambulatory Care Center opens in 2015, VAPAHCS will continue to operate, maintain and upgrade buildings and services at the Livermore Division.

Note to editors: This Veterans News and previous CDVA news releases, advisories, and newsletters are available on our website at www.cdva.ca.gov and via email from Jaime.Arteaga@cdva.ca.gov.